

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SUVA 00600 162149Z
ACTION OES-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 EB-08 COME-00
DLOS-09 CG-00 DOTE-00 L-03 PM-05 NSC-05 SP-02
SS-15 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 /100 W
-----042810 162153Z /73

P R 140440Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY SUVA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7261
INFO USMISSION GENEVA GTE
AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY
AMEMBASSY SEOUL
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SUVA 0600

CINCPAC FOR POLAD, TOKYO FOR RFO

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDIP, FJ, EFIS, PLOS
SUBJECT: REGIONAL SOUTH PACIFIC FISHERIES AGENCY

REF: A) WELLINGTON 1734, B) STATE 89082

1. BASED ON MY CALLS ON NEW ZEALAND AND AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSIONERS
AS WELL AS BRIEF MEETING WITH PERMANENT SECRETARY OF THE FOREIGN
OFFICE, I CAN CONTRIBUTE THE FOLLOWING WITH REGARD TO THE ALLEGED
FIJI REVERSAL ON RSPFA.

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(1) INITIAL ALERT (REF A) WAS CAUSED BY NZ HIGH
COMMISSIONER'S REPORT FROM SUVA REFLECTING HIS CONVERSATION WITH
PERMANENT SECRETARY (PS) ABOUT 1 APRIL. HOWEVER HICOM
TO THIS DAY IS NOT QUITE SURE WHETHER PS REFLECTED FIRM FIJI
DECISIONS OR HE WAS "KITE FLYING", AS HE PUT IT. HE HAD ARGUED
WITH PS AND IN FACT HAD COMPELLED HIM TO AGREE THAT IT WAS
TOO LATE FOR FIJI TO HAVE SECOND THOUGHTS ABOUT RSPFA AND THAT

THE TIME TO SPEAK UP WAS LAST NOVEMBER WHEN THE SUVA CONFERENCE WAS HELD.

(2) ACCORDING TO AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSIONER THE PERMANENT SECRETARY TOOK A SOFTER LINE WHEN HE SPOKE TO HIM ON 10 APRIL INDICATING THAT FIJI WHILE PREOCCUPIED WITH MANY QUESTIONS CONCERNING RSPFA HAD NOT NOOKEN FIRM DECISIONS. HE SPOKE OF HIS BEING IN THE PROCESS OF DRAFTING A LETTER TO SPEC SUGGESTING THAT SPEC PREPARE A PAPER FOR THE JUNE RSPFA MEETING OUTLINING THE THREE OPTIONS AVAILABLE TO PARTICIPANTS, NAMELY (A) TWO TEXTS APPROACH (B) ONE TEXT WITH THE U.S. EXPRESSING RESERVATIONS ABOUT THE ARTICLE ON MIGRATORY SPECIES AND (C) TURNING THE ENTIRE MATTER OVER TO THE SOUTH PACIFIC COMMISSION.

(3) THE PS TOOK AN EVEN SOFTER LINE WITH ME BY SAYING THAT IT IS UNTHINKABLE THAT THE U.S. COULD BE KEPT OUT OF SUCH A REGIONAL ARRANGEMENT BUT INDICATED THAT VARIOUS ASPECTS OF RSPFA SHOULD BE DISCUSSED AT LENGTH OVER LUNCH SOON. HE PROMISED TO CALL ME.

(4) IN LIGHT OF THE ABOVE THE FOLLOWING EXPLANATION MAY BE OFFERED TO PUT IN PERSPECTIVE WHAT APPEARS AS A FIJIAN TURN-ABOUT. IT IS AN AXIOM IN THIS COUNTRY THAT NOTHING IS EVER DECIDED WITHOUT RATU MARA'S INSTRUCTIONS. IT SO HAPPENED THAT RATU MARA WAS ABSENT FROM SUVA DURING THE RSPFA NOVEMBER MEETING AND THEREFORE WAS NOT AVAILABLE TO THE FIJI DELEGATION FOR GUIDANCE. THE AUSTRALIAN AND NZ HICOMS TELL ME THAT THE FIJI

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DELEGATION TO THAT MEETING WAS NOT PARTICULARLY ACTIVE AND SPOKE UP ONLY ON MINOR PROCEDURAL MATTERS.

(5) WHAT MUST HAVE HAPPENED IN THE LAST FEW WEEKS WAS THAT THE PREPARATION OF THE DECLARATION SIGNED YESTERDAY BY THE PM DECLARING FIJI'S ARCHIPELAGIC STATUS BROUGHT UP THE QUESTION OF RSPFA. THIS PROVIDED RATU MARA PROBABLY THE FIRST OCCASION TO FOCUS ON THIS SUBJECT AS IT EVOLVED AT THE NOVEMBER MEETING AND HE STARTED ASKING QUESTIONS. AS IS OFTEN THE CASE WITH GOVERNMENTS DOMINATED BY A STRONG PERSONALITY LIKE RATU MARA'S, HIS PROBING QUESTIONS WERE PERCEIVED BY THE PERMANENT SECRETARY AND OTHERS AS EXPRESSIONS OF REJECTION OF THE ENTIRE RSPFA IDEA AND PRESENTED AS SUCH TO NZ HICOM. THE SOFTER LINE TAKEN BY THE PS IN THE LAST FEW DAYS CAN BE EXPLAINED BY THE DISCOVERY IN MORE RECENT CONVERSATIONS WITH THE PM THAT RATU MARA WAS MERELY PROBING AND WAS NOT QUITE READY TO TAKE THE EXTREME POSITIONS PRESENTED BY THE PS TO NZ HICOM.

(6) THE NEW ZEALAND AND AUSTRALIAN HICOMS FIND THE FOREGOING QUITE PLAUSIBLE AND ARE CONCENTRATING THEIR EFFORTS TO FIND OUT WHETHER THE LETTER TO SPEC REGARDING THE OPTIONS WILL INDEED BE WRITTEN AND ON HOW TO SECURE A COPY.

2. THIS GIVE ME GOOD OPPORTUNITY TO ASSOCIATE MYSELF WITH

PORT MORESBY'S 485 AND TO SECOND ITS PLEA FOR ANSWERS TO AMBASSADOR
OSMSTEAD'S THOUGHTFUL AND CANDID QUESTIONS.
CONDON

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